01336

1975/03/22

6:15 pm 3/22/75
Tim Hinch, Emile

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 22, 1975

Dear President Thieu:

The current North Vietnamese offensive against your country is profoundly disturbing and personally anguishing. It is my view that Hanoi's attack represents nothing less than an abrogation by force of the Paris Agreement.

This turn of events bears the most severe consequences for both our nations. For you and your countrymen it is a time of supreme sacrifice which will determine the very fate of your nation. I am confident that under your leadership the armed forces and people of the Republic of Vietnam will continue their tenacious defense against this new aggression. I am equally confident that given additional external support, you will prevail in your struggle for self-determination.

As for the United States, the issue is no less critical. By its action, Hanoi is again seeking to undermine all that we have sought to achieve at enormous cost over the past ten years. Concurrently, at stake is America's resolve to support a friend who is being attacked by heavily armed forces in total violation of a solemn international agreement.

I, for my part, am determined that America shall stand firmly behind the Republic of Vietnam at this crucial hour. With a view to honoring the responsibilities of the United States in this situation, I am following developments with the closest attention and am consulting on an urgent basis with my advisors on actions which the situation may require and the law permit.

With regard to the provision of adequate military assistance to your armed forces, you can be sure that I shall bend every effort to meet your material needs on the battlefield.

In closing, I wish to repeat my continued high respect for your resolve and for the constancy and courage of your people.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Ford

His Excellency
Nguyen Van Thieu
President of the
Republic of Vietnam
Saigon

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library